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Positive Thoughts = Positive Outcomes!

I have made two specific lifestyle changes to better the 'living' in my life. The first was to fight cancer. My family history of cancer was pretty prominent on both sides of the family. I assumed that someday my turn would probably come – around 60, 70, or 80 years of age. To my surprise, that age was 25. I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphocytic (aka Lymphoblastic) Leukemia, a form of leukemia mostly diagnosed in children.

For me, there was only one choice – to fight! I faced the challenges of cancer head on and learned to overcome them. I have learned that looking at the positive side of things (no hair + no hair products = less time primping in the morning and less money spent) and having a sense of humor help you get through a lot of difficult times. I'm not saying I didn't feel depressed at times, but you have to realize if you sit on the pity potty too long, you're going to get hemorrhoids! I wouldn't recommend it for any of the challenges life tosses our way. Stand up and do something to change it!

During one of my treatments, I had an epiphany. "If we can worry ourselves sick, why can't we think ourselves well?" The brain is arguably the most important organ in the body. By utilizing the power of my brain, I began to think myself well. I envisioned Ms. Pacman going through my veins, eating the cancer cells. In facing challenges, we can either: think we can – and succeed, or think we can't – and fail. I chose to succeed with a positive outlook, laughter, and the power of prayer. I am 20 years cancer-free this year! Yes, you can now figure my age – and I'm proud of it – I'm still here!!! I had cancer – it never had me.

My second lifestyle change resulted from the need to focus on things within my power to reduce my risk of getting cancer again or another medical condition. We can't pick our family genes, but we can make choices to help minimize our genetic risk factors. As I age, I face other family risks of cholesterol and high blood pressure. After celebrating my survival of cancer, maybe a little too much, I needed to lose some weight. I didn't like the way I looked or how I felt. I lacked energy and always seemed tired. I had only myself to blame for eating my way (fast food and minimal activity) to my over-weight situation, now I needed to learn how to eat my way (positive food choices, portion control, and exercise) back to a healthy weight.

I decided to join Weight Watchers and signed up for Tabata boot camps. I lost 12 lbs. the first boot camp! I now try to walk at least 4 miles a day. Again utilizing the power of envisioning, I pictured myself wearing a pair of jeans from high school. I succeeded! I am 82 pounds lighter, healthier, more confident, more active than I've ever been. I feel great!

Although I lost the first 20 lbs. before joining NDOR, I feel the **wellNEssoptions** program is awesome! The additional resources, tips, healthy recipes, and success stories help motivate me and offer support, not only with my own health, but my family's as well. I love seeing the awesome scenery on the trails and being able to challenge myself and others with some friendly competition on Walk This Way. The **wellNEssoptions** program offers so many support options – for free! I am very grateful that the State of Nebraska offers this award-winning program which has been a cost saving, health improving benefit for me and my family. Engage your brain with powerful, positive thinking and go at it with full heart to improve your health today!